

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing cash with a depository, the depository being independent of said customer such that the identity of said customer remains anonymous; ;

the depository converting said cash into electronic currency, setting up a numbered account and placing said electronic currency into said numbered account;

the depository issuing to the customer ~~an anonymous, uniquely~~ one or more anonymous and randomly-generated serial number numbers corresponding to the ~~amount of cash deposited therewith~~ account number; and

the customer submitting ~~the~~ at least one serial number to the on-line merchant to purchase goods or services, said on-line merchant and said depository being unable to identify said customer during said purchase and;

the depository transferring an amount of said electronic currency corresponding to said at least one serial number to an account of said on-line merchant.

2. (cancelled) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing an amount of monies with a seller, said seller informing a server of the amount of monies received from said customer, said customer, seller and server each being independent of each other such that the identity of said customer remains anonymous;

said server issuing to said customer an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of monies deposited with seller; and

said customer submitting the serial number to an on-line merchant to purchase goods or services.

3. (cancelled) The method of claim 2, further including the step of said server, upon receipt of information from said seller of the amount of monies seller received from said customer, electronically transfers an amount of monies from an account of said seller to a second account.

4. (cancelled) The method of claim 3, further including the step of said server electronically transfers an amount of monies from said second account to an account of said on-line merchant.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 1, further including the step of said on-line merchant, upon receipt of said serial number submitted by said customer, transmits said serial number to said a server of said depository for authentication.

6. (cancelled) The method of claim 2, wherein said amount of monies deposited with said seller is in the form of cash.

7. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2 1, further including the step of providing a computer readable form having ~~the serial numbers~~ said at least one serial number corresponding to the amount of funds deposited therewith disposed thereon.

8. (cancelled) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing an amount of monies with a seller, said seller informing a server of the amount of monies received from said customer;

said server issuing to said customer an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of monies deposited with seller, said serial number comprising information about said customer's age; and

said customer submitting the serial number to an on-line merchant to purchase goods or services.

9. (cancelled) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing cash with a depository, the depository issuing to the customer an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of cash deposited therewith, said serial number comprising information about said customer's age; and

submitting the serial number to the on-line merchant to purchase goods or services.

10. (new) A method according to claim 1, wherein said one or more serial numbers comprises information about said customer's age.